

KC Weed News – March 2013

King County, Washington

(<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-news.aspx>)

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Weed of the Month: [Shiny Geranium](#) (*Geranium lucidum*), a [Class A Noxious Weed](#) in King County, Washington

This month's featured plant is not very scary to look at. It's actually a rather charming-looking wild geranium with tiny pink flowers. I'm not talking about the very familiar and much-disliked noxious weed called herb-Robert (or stinky Bob), although that's also a somewhat cute if pernicious wild geranium originating from Europe. Shiny geranium, also called shining crane's-bill, doesn't smell stinky like herb-Robert, but it has the potential to be just as invasive and possibly worse in some woodlands. Generally found in shady or somewhat shady habitats, shiny geranium appears to be more invasive in moist conditions than herb Robert, and capable of dominating the understory and excluding other plants.

Shiny geranium is widespread in its native range in Europe and parts of Asia and north Africa, and has been used as a medicinal herb in Europe for centuries. In North America, it appears to be limited to the west coast. It was initially reported in Oregon and California, and then in Washington, where it was first collected in 2006. There are some very alarming infestations in the Willamette Valley in Oregon, particularly in oak woodlands, forest edges and Oregon ash forests. In Washington, the plant is still

fairly limited but has shown itself to be very invasive in a few western counties including Skagit, Thurston, Clark and Lewis Counties.

In King County, we are very concerned about this plant partly because of where it has shown up. First, there was an infestation in a native plant landscape installed at the Northgate Thornton Creek daylighting project. It appears that the shiny geranium was a contaminant in nursery stock or fill material, apparently originating from Oregon. Next, small amounts of the plant were discovered growing in nursery pots in a garden in north Seattle. Third, a rather large patch was found growing along a road by a former nursery in south King County, once again with a possible Oregon connection (the property owner is based in Portland). It appears that we need to get the word out to people purchasing plants from Oregon to watch for shiny geranium hitchhiking a ride up north.

Identifying shiny geranium is fairly easy, although there are a number of look alikes. It has rounded, lobed leaves similar to dovesfoot geranium (*Geranium molle*, a common turf weed) but that are shiny and not as hairy as dovesfoot leaves. Shiny geranium stems are usually red or pinkish and not hairy like those of herb-Robert. The flowers are tiny, pink and in pairs, with five petals and distinctive “keels” around the base of the flower (on the sepals). Shiny geranium is an annual (or sometimes biennial) and can be pulled out fairly easily, although it has a tendency to break off at the crown and can re-sprout if not carefully removed. The plants are most obvious in spring when they grow densely and capitalize on early season moisture. By summer time, the plants have mostly gone to seed and tend to fade back into the background. The seeds are tiny and easily transported by animals, people, and in soil.

If you see any shiny geranium in King County, Washington, please [report it to us](#) as soon as possible so we can follow up on it and prevent it from spreading further. [Our website](#) (www.kingcounty.gov/weeds) has photos and information on shiny geranium as well as links to other great resources on this plant. In Washington outside of King County, please visit the [Washington State Weed Board website](#). In Oregon, make sure to visit the [Oregon Department of Agriculture website](#) for more information. Feel free to [contact us](#) if you have any questions about this plant or any other noxious weeds.

Weed Tips for March

Watch for noxious weeds emerging this month. [Garlic mustard](#) rosettes are getting bigger and are easier to spot in March. By April they will start bolting and forming flower stalks. [Giant hogweed](#) leaves are emerging and should be easy to spot this month or next unless they are growing in a blackberry patch, in which case you'll have to wait until May or June for the stems to reach above the brambles. [Poison-hemlock](#) clumps are growing now as well, so check your gardens, pastures, parks and school yards carefully for this highly toxic plant. In addition to the common [bull thistle](#) that is likely showing up everywhere about now, you should also look for the less common but more invasive [milk thistle](#), especially in southeast King County where it is mostly found. If you have questions about what to do with noxious weeds this time of year, please feel free to [contact us](#).

It's a good time to pull Scotch broom (and gorse too if you've got it!). The weather is mild and the soil is still nice and moist, making weed pulling easier than in the heat of the summer. [Gorse](#) is already flowering and [Scotch broom](#) starts flowering later this month, but there's plenty of time to pull these plants before the seed pods form in the summer. If you are in King County, we have [weed wrenches](#) you can borrow, but they get pretty popular this time of year so plan ahead. Call us at 206-296-0290 to reserve one for a week or two and then come down to [our office](#) by the Seattle train station to pick it up. If you haven't used a weed wrench before, don't worry, it's easy to learn how.

What's your tansy plan? Before the season gets underway is a great time to make plans for how to deal with [tansy ragwort](#) this year. If you were overwhelmed last year (and it was a bumper crop for many people with tansy), then expect to have lots of rosettes this year where you had plants go to seed last year. And if you were able to remove all the flowering plants in time, pat yourself on the back for a job well done, then get set to look for more scattered but probably still numerous tansy plants this spring. Remember, the seeds stay viable in the soil for over 10 years, possibly as long as 20. If you have any questions about how to be more strategic about managing tansy ragwort, please contact us and a weed specialist can work with you on a plan. If you were frustrated by the lack of control around you on roads or neighbor's properties, also give us a call at 206-296-0290, or [report it online](#), so we can make sure those sites get controlled too.

Keep an eye out for [spurge laurel](#), flowering this month. You might not notice the small greenish flowers tucked under the leaves. In fact, if you come across a stray spurge laurel plant, you might think you are looking at a small rhododendron or an odd-looking cherry laurel plant. But it is neither. This tough to control, garden escapee is actually pretty common in urban greenspaces and parks in King County, but it is often overlooked until it grows into a large infestation. Because it is toxic and can be irritating to your skin, make sure you wear gloves when removing this plant. There is an excellent description of spurge laurel in a recent blog post out of the Wallingford neighborhood in Seattle: <http://blog.seattlepi.com/wallingford/2012/03/02/wallingford-weed/>.

Watch out for birds in blackberry thickets. If you are looking for a good reason to procrastinate your [blackberry](#) removal, you can say "it's for the birds". Many birds are starting to nest this month and blackberry thickets are a popular place for some bird species. For areas that provide important bird habitat (especially where there are few alternatives near by), the [Green Seattle Partnership](#) makes the very good recommendation that you consider refraining from large blackberry removal projects during the nesting season (mid-March to the end of June). If you are removing blackberries this time of year, consider removing only about a quarter of the infestation at a time. This gives the birds time to find other options.

Changes to the King County Noxious Weed List

At the annual county weed list hearing held in January, the [King County Noxious Weed Control Board](#) officially adopted the [2013 King County Noxious Weed List](#). The list includes one new class A weed, [French broom](#), one new regulated Class B weed, [tall hawkweed](#), and one new non-regulated Class C weed, [common teasel](#). One weed, [perennial sowthistle](#), was moved from the Regulated Class B list to the Non-Regulated list.

Also, for two species there were changes in the parts of the county where control is required. [Brazilian elodea](#) control is now required everywhere in the county except lakes Dolloff, Fenwick, Union, Washington, and Sammamish, and the Sammamish River (there was previously no exception for Lake Dolloff or the Sammamish River). In addition, control of [invasive knotweed](#) is now required along the Cedar River and its tributaries, above the Renton City Limits. Control of knotweed was previously only required along the Green River and its tributaries, above the Auburn City Limits. The Board limited the requirement for control on the Cedar River to the area right alongside the river, similar to the area already selected for the Green River (see the knotweed footnote on the [Non-Regulated Noxious Weed List](#)). In addition, they will only require control as long as there is funding available through grants or other sources for private landowners to receive knotweed control free of charge. The goal of this change is to enable the grant-funded Stewardship in Action project to systematically control all of the knotweed

along the river, because any skipped populations will quickly re-infest the rest of the river. If you have any questions about the King County Weed List, please contact our program at 206-296-0290 or by email at noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov. For more information and photos, please visit our website at www.kingcounty.gov/weeds.

Holly control research provides tips on effective methods

Results are in from a recent study led by Earthcorps' ecologist Nelson Salisbury comparing different methods of chemical control of English holly. The study tested three methods commonly used to target woody vegetation: cut stump, frilling and injection (utilizing the EZ-Ject injection tool and herbicide capsules). These methods were applied in the spring and the fall and two herbicides were tested for each method: triclopyr ester and glyphosate for the cut stump and frilling methods, and glyphosate and imazapyr for the injection method. Some of the main findings of the study were:

1. Frilling with triclopyr ester was very effective and there was not much difference between spring and fall for this method. Triclopyr ester more effective than glyphosate for frilling.
2. The EZ-ject method was highly effective with imazapyr capsules but not very effective with glyphosate capsules. Spring was somewhat more effective than fall with this method.
3. The treated holly had fewer stump sprouts with triclopyr ester and imazapyr than with glyphosate and fewer with frilling than with cut stump. Also, fall treatment resulted in fewer sprouts than spring, especially for glyphosate.
4. The most effective methods overall were frilling or cut stump with triclopyr ester and the EZ-ject imazapyr capsules.

For more detailed results or information about this study, please contact Nelson Salisbury at nelson@earthcorps.org or Sasha Shaw at sasha.shaw@kingcounty.gov.

Sign up for Professional Noxious Weed Recertification Seminars

We are taking registrations for our annual noxious weed workshops for vegetation management personnel, landscapers, and others working on noxious weed control. Session dates are May 8 and May 15, and May 22. The agenda will be the same for all three sessions and will include a variety of topics related to noxious weed identification and control as well as the ever popular live weed specimens (seeing weeds in person is the best way to learn to identify them). More information is available [on our website](#).

All sessions are free and open to the public but space is limited so pre-registration is required. WSDA pesticide license recertification credits will be available (4 credits). [Register online](#) on our website. For more information, contact us at 206-296-0290 or by email at noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov.

South Session: Wednesday, **May 8**, 8 am to 12 pm, [Kent Memorial Park Building](#), 850 N. Central, Kent, WA 98032 (NOTE: this session is full, so please [contact us](#) to be put on a waiting list)

North Session: Wednesday, **May 15**, 8 am to 12 pm, [Northshore Utility District](#), Northshore Room, 6830 NE 185th St., Kenmore, WA 98028,

Preston Session: Wednesday, **May 22**, 8am to 12 pm, [Preston Community Center](#), Preston, WA 98027

Where to Find our Weed Info Booth this Spring

You will be able to ask weed questions in person, check out live weed specimens, and pick up fact sheets and booklets at the following locations in March, April and May (check out our [complete schedule](#) online)

and if you have a community event that could use a booth on invasive and noxious weeds, please [contact us](#)):

- March 16, [Lake Forest Park Earth Smart Green Fair](#), 10am-2pm, Third Place Commons, Lake Forest Park
- April 20, [Shoreline Earth Day Every Day Fair](#), 9am-3pm, Central Market, 15505 Westminster Way N, Shoreline
- April 20, [Newcastle Earth Day Fair](#), 10am-3pm, Lake Boren Park, Newcastle
- April 27, Renton Arbor Day/Earth Day Fair, 9:00am-1:00pm, May Creek Trail, 4260 Lake Washington Blvd, Renton
- May 4-5, [Master Gardener Plant Sale Information Fair](#), Sat 8-5, Sun 10-3, [UWBG Center for Urban Horticulture](#), 3501 NE 41st St., Seattle
- May 11, [WNPS Native Plant Sale](#), 9am-4pm, [Mercerdale Park](#), 77th SE & SE 32nd, Mercer Island
- May 11, [Tukwila's Annual Backyard Wildlife Festival](#), 9am-3pm, Tukwila Community Center, 12424 42nd Avenue South

Valuable New Weed Control Reference Book for Western United States

A new book called **Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States** is packed full of useful and up to date information on controlling invasive weeds found in the West. You can get more information and purchase this book from WSWS by following this link:

<http://www.wsweedscience.org/Products/proddetail.asp?prod=Book2>.

This book contains detailed species information including control options, both non-chemical and chemical, for nearly 242 plant species, with tables of non-chemical and chemical control options for close to 100 additional species. Information is also provided on the variety of control techniques and equipment used in natural areas, as well as safety and environmental considerations, herbicide characteristics, rainfall periods and grazing and haying restrictions for terrestrial herbicides, a list of species with biological control agents either available or under development, and helpful conversion tables.

Ivy-Free Vashon offers ivy control workshop on March 23

Ivy-Free Vashon is a coalition of islanders who have organized themselves to fight back against [English ivy](#), which is taking over the island's trees. On March 23 from 10:30 to 12:00 at corner of Dugway Road SW and SW Quartermaster Drive, the group will be loaning out ivy-removal tools, giving away free native plants, demonstrating how to remove ivy, teaching what ivy does to forests, and holding a drawing for one lucky person to win an expert consultation on your land. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit **Ivy-Free Vashon** on Facebook.

Green Kent Partnership Growing and Adding New Stewards

If you live in the Kent area and enjoy physical activity, being outdoors and helping to improve your community, consider going to the next Green Kent Steward orientation, **Saturday, March 23, 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Kent Senior Center**. Find out more at www.GreenKent.org or call 253-856-5113 to register.

According to Victoria Andrews with Kent Parks, Recreation and Community Services, 2012 was a big year for the [Green Kent Partnership](#), a collaboration involving the city, Forterra, other agencies and residents that began in 2009 and received initial funding through a \$95,000 grant from the King Conservation

District, which continues to support the program with annual grants. In 2012, trained steward volunteers led 30 work parties and there were 37 other restoration-focused events during the year, including a Forterra-led tree planting party at Lake Fenwick Park underwritten by Seattle band Pearl Jam mitigation funds (band member Stone Gossard showed up to help!), an LDS Day of Service involving 201 volunteers, and REI events at Canterbury Park, Lake Fenwick Park and the Green River Natural Resources Area (GRNRA). Seven Eagle Scouts also did Green Kent restoration projects at Kent parks. All in all, a grand total of 5,324 volunteer hours were logged.

The year culminated in the first annual Green Kent Day on October 27, with 200 participants planting and mulching during a constant Northwest downpour. A chef and his staff from Farrington Court, a local retirement community, provided a barbecue lunch for everyone at the end of the morning, which also included a VIP tour for city council members, funders and other stakeholders. Over 100 acres are now in some phase of restoration and the city is recruiting more stewards, support stewards and outreach volunteers.

Andrews feels Green Kent is important because of the very real threat that within our children's lifetime, Kent's urban tree canopy will be taken over by English ivy, Himalayan blackberry, Scotch broom and other fast-growing, non-native species. As she explains, having healthy natural spaces near where people live provides all sorts of benefits to us. Trees, wetlands and green space are public assets that clean our air, buffer noise, absorb storm water to reduce flooding, increase property values, and provide habitat for birds and animals and recreational benefits for residents. So, it is in everyone's interest to keep them healthy. In 2012, Kent's Park Stewards and their volunteers began implementing the four-step "tree-iage" process and were able to plant close to 2,200 native plants at sites that had been choked with Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, Scotch broom and other invasive plants.

Green Kirkland is Fighting Hard to Save Kirkland's Forests from Invasive Plants

According to Sharon Rodman, supervisor of the [Green Kirkland Partnership](#), if you took all the invasive plants removed by Green Kirkland from 2007 through 2012 and laid them out side-by-side, they would cover approximately 36 acres. Of that total, about 20 acres was Himalayan blackberry, 3.5 acres was Scotch broom, 3 acres was English ivy and the rest were other, less common invasive plants. To date 213 trees in Kirkland's parks have been freed of ivy.

This work didn't come free. For the past three years, Kirkland has spent approximately \$140,000 annually on the Green Kirkland Partnership program working on natural areas restoration work in parks, including organizing volunteer events and direct costs of invasive removal and native plant revegetation. In people costs, the investment is even more impressive. Rodman estimates that from 2005 to 2012, this work took 48,679 hours of effort by volunteers and contractors, and 15,000 total staff hours.

For 2012, the Green Kirkland Partnership reported the following impressive results: 2,164 volunteers contributed more than 9,000 hours to restore natural areas, 40 plus acres of natural areas were in restoration in 2012, and volunteers planted over 5,500 native plants, including trees. If you are inspired to contribute your time to this effort, check out the [Green Kirkland website](#) or join the next work party on March 16 at Cotton Hill Park from 10-2 (register for the event with [EarthCorps](#)).

Take Action to Save Puget Sound

Stormwater, or polluted runoff, is the leading contributor to reduced water quality in Puget Sound. King County offers resources to learn more about polluted runoff, its impacts on the environment, how King

County is addressing the issue, and how you can help. To learn more about what you can do, visit the [Puget Sound Starts Here](#) website.

As part of an ongoing commitment to protect public health and improve environmental conditions in our streams, rivers, lakes and Puget Sound, King County annually reviews and updates its overall stormwater management plan. A detailed description of the [plan](#) can be found online.

King County would like your input. You can take the [online stormwater survey](#), or send a comment to stormwater@kingcounty.gov, or through the U.S. mail to the Stormwater Management Team, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, 201 S. Jackson St., Suite 600, Seattle, WA 98104. **Public comment on the program is being collected through March 10.**

To learn more, you can watch these short videos.

- [What is stormwater and why is it important?](#)
- [Stormwater regulations - local and national](#)
- [King County's Stormwater Management Plan - Ten steps to success](#)
- [How you can improve stormwater to help Puget Sound](#)

View more in the [Stormwater Video Library](#). You can test your knowledge by taking the [stormwater quiz](#).

For more information about stormwater, please visit:

- [Overview of the King County Stormwater Management Program](#)
- [Answers to frequently asked questions](#) about stormwater
- [King County stormwater services website](#)
- [2013 Draft King County Stormwater Management Program](#)
- [King County's Municipal NPDES Stormwater Permit](#) (Washington State Department of Ecology website)
- [Puget Sound Starts Here](#) website

Presentations on the Stormwater Management Program to interest groups are available by request. Please email stormwater@kingcounty.gov.

Pesticide survey coming to Puget Sound residents

According to a recent [news release](#) from Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), Puget Sound homeowners are being asked about their pesticide use. In an effort to learn more about how the average urban resident uses pesticides on a day-to-day basis, the [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) and the USDA [National Agricultural Statistics Service](#) (NASS) is mailing surveys to more than 15,000 homeowners around the Puget Sound region to gather data on the pesticides they use and how they use them. The three-page survey is being mailed to people living in the 12 counties making up the Puget Sound region. All the information gathered will be kept strictly confidential and the response can be returned in self-addressed envelopes provided.

The survey was prompted by a [2011 study](#) conducted by the [Department of Ecology](#) (Ecology), which identified urban use of agricultural products as a potentially significant source of copper to freshwater and marine areas in the Puget Sound basin. Copper is a component of many common pesticides and is toxic to fish and other aquatic species. Young salmon, in particular, are especially susceptible to the effects of copper.

While the state has data about pesticide use in agriculture areas, little is known about pesticide use by homeowners. WSDA and Ecology are taking this opportunity to learn more about all pesticide uses in urban areas rather than just collect information on products containing copper.

Ecology partnered with WSDA on this project, providing \$135,000 in funding for three surveys. The survey to homeowners is the first. A second survey will focus on commercial pesticide applicators in the Puget Sound region and the third will gather the same information from municipalities, public works agencies, school districts and other public operators that use pesticides. Together, the three surveys are expected to result in a better understanding of how certain pesticides end up in the region's waterways and help develop effective outreach and education programs. A report detailing the results of the survey is expected to be completed by Dec. 31, 2013. For more information, contact: [Hector Castro](#) at (360) 902-1815.

Levels of several pesticides declining in salmon-bearing streams

In a [related news release](#), WSDA and Ecology recently reported that pesticide concentrations have declined over the past decade in several salmon-bearing streams in Washington, according to results of water quality monitoring conducted by the Washington state departments of [Agriculture](#) (WSDA) and [Ecology](#). In addition, when detected, scientists found that most pesticides showed up at concentrations below levels of concern for aquatic species.

[The Surface Water Monitoring program](#) is one of the most intensive pesticide monitoring efforts in the country for streams and other surface waters. The program started in 2003 as a means of measuring how much of the pesticides used in agricultural and urban areas finds its way into surface waters. State and federal agencies use the data to evaluate the effectiveness of existing regulations. Pesticide applicators and farmers use the information as they plan their pest control programs.

The most recent report of this monitoring program, "[Surface Water Monitoring Program for Pesticides in Salmon-Bearing Streams, 2009-2011 Triennial Report. A Cooperative Study by the Washington State Departments of Ecology and Agriculture](#)," is the first which has allowed researchers to see trends in the data for several of the study areas. In 10 years of monitoring, researchers have analyzed more than 2,600 samples. During the last three years 74 different types of pesticides and their break-down products were detected. Decreasing trends in pesticide concentrations were seen for 16 select pesticides, and increasing trends in concentrations were seen for 10 pesticides. The full report is available at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/toxics/pesticides.htm, or visit www.Agr.wa.gov/PestFert/NatResources for links to the report and a summary fact sheet.

The Center for Invasive Species Management offers a series of webinars on invasive plant management in natural areas

The webinars are oriented toward different regions of the west. The dates are Pacific Northwest: March 20, 2013, Greater Southwest: March 27, 2013, and High Plains and Intermountain West: March 28, 2013. The goals of the webinars are to:

- Increase your ability to effectively remove invasive plant species that threaten commerce, public safety, recreation, wildlife habitat, and wildland health while complying with state and federal laws.
- Learn about the best integrated management tools available for conserving healthy ecosystems and sustaining desired populations of forbs, shrubs, trees, and grasses.

- Improve your ability to achieve restoration and conservation outcomes that are resilient to wildfire, inhibit erosion, and promote water quality—in a financially responsible, cost-effective manner—by selecting the best available herbicide tools.
- Improve the overall efficiency, effectiveness, and environmental sensitivity of herbicide applications.
- Obtain control information, expert contacts, and resources that will improve your ability to manage invasive plants.

For more information and to register, see the [Center for Invasive Species Management](#) website or [register online](#).